

'death of a salesman' by arthur miller

Literature



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Death of a Salesman is a play written by Arthur Miller. It depicts the failure of man to cope with the self and his tendency to behave as a Rip Van Winkle, failing to keep up with the changes that the self and the society embody with the passage of time. The play revolves around the last 24 hours in the life of Willy Loman, his suicide and funeral serving as the end. Recollections, dreams, skirmishes and arguments are the tools that the playwright uses to address the theme of the play.

The Loman family, comprising Willy, Linda, Biff, and Happy are the tools that Miller utilizes to erect an automatic and continuing saga that has refutation, disagreement, and a tug between order and disorder at its helm. Involved in an affair almost 15 years ago, Willy tries to put a curtain on it throughout his life. This is the thread on which Miller builds the play, putting light as to how an incident and the following cover up tell of a person in the eyes of the world. An example is Willy's son Biff. Biff was a huge fan of Willy, advancing comprehensive belief in the tales that Willy told him.

Willy had a belief that man could achieve anything provided he was " well-liked. " Billy readily approved of this too. However, on apprehending Willy's disloyalty to Linda, Biff's perception of Willy and his values undergoes a metamorphosis. The man known to the society and to Willy himself was nothing but a phony impression of the real Willy. The play has a major theme which also breeds divergence in that the family in general and Willy in particular are unable to draw a line between reality and illusion. Willy is unable to comprehend the stature of himself and his sons.

Under a false impression that the father and sons are gifted enough to overcome the odds, he is in fact blinded by not coming to terms with their

inability to attain success. This fault is embedded in the characters of Willy, Hap, and Biff; although in the case of Biff it is found on a very limited scale. The play highlights this on a number of occasions, most notably Willy living under the impression or illusion that success is an outfall of being well liked or whole heartedly accepted by society. Often in the play, one finds Willy having bouts of recollections comprising dialogue and circumstances dating back years.

This represents his lack of capacity to come to terms with reality. Willy's fall from the sky is an outfall of this tug between reality and illusion. Towards the end, he adopts the notion that man can be "worth more dead than alive." This notion is refuted by Charlie, as he serves as the ambassador of reality. He says "A man isn't worth anything dead" in response to Willy's earlier remark. The American Dream has escaped Willy. The play serves as an interpretation of society. Willy ended up nowhere, used as if a "piece of fruit", although his whole life was spent under the shadow of Democracy and Free Enterprise.

The performance of the play constitutes an exceptional occurrence for the spectators. There is a traditional aspect to the play as the play embodies socialization between actors, a story line, and certain dramatic rudiments. These include exposition, rising action, conflict and climax. But the play also has a few characteristics that distance it from a traditional stature. This is embedded in the way Miller contrasts Willy's mental state using time and space as his tools. This technique allows Miller's spectators to observe Willy's psychological unsteadiness and join in it.